

**Advisory Committee
Meeting
January 26, 2011, 7 p.m.
Juliani Room, Town Hall**

Jack Haley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Those present included Rick Hill, Steve Simons, Caren Parker, Virginia Ferko, Catherine Johnson, Maura Murphy, Laura Hockett, Philip Licari, Richard Page, Polly Smith, Derek Redgate, David Murphy, and Barbara McMahon. Jason Whittet was absent.

Minutes. Upon a motion made by Ms. Ferko and seconded by Mr. Licari, members voted to approve the minutes of January 5 and January 8, 2011. The vote was 13-0.

Assessors FY12 Budget. Guests Assessors Chair David Livingston and Chief Assessor Donna McCabe presented the FY12 Assessors Budget and attributed the \$6,700 increase from FY11 to consultant costs for preparing for the audit for state certification, which recurs every three years. Advisory asked for a breakdown of the costs for the consultants.

Citizen Speak. Before opening the floor to Citizen Speak, Mr. Haley described Advisory's role in the Town Meeting (TM) process and the emphasis on budgeting with a 5-year outlook through the Town Wide Financial Plan (TWFP).

Jennifer Frank of 27 Chesterton Road urged support for level funding for the School Operating Budget and reconsideration of cuts to art programs.

Wendy Garber 3 Garden Road expressed concern about school bus fees, the elimination of library books, and other cuts to the School budget and urged Advisory to revisit budget guidelines and allow Schools to remain at level funding.

Kathy Bueker of 21 Berkeley Road spoke to the need to support and fund Wellesley's quality teachers.

Adam Cohen of 190 Washington Street stated that the school system was the main reason he moved to Wellesley, and he expressed concern that budget cuts would erode the quality of the school system.

Jessica Dormitzer of 39 Wingate Road spoke to finding alternative ways to raise funds through such means as athletic and equipment fees, rather than moving to cuts that force librarians and art and music teachers to split time between the various elementary schools.

Kathleen Woodward of 98 Oak Street and a Town Meeting member addressed remarks made earlier by Mr. Haley and characterized them as having "trivialized" the role of Advisory at Town Meeting. She said TM Members rely "heavily" on the detailed work presented by Advisory, and Advisory should bear this in mind when asking the Schools to make cuts.

Josh Bechman of 22 Saunders Terrance stated that he moved to Wellesley because of the excellent reputation of the school system and he stated that quality schools are important to housing values.

Sheila Olson of 86 Elmwood Road indicated that the long-term quality of the school system is endangered by "chipping away" at the budget.

Lisa Collins of One Leighton Road said that it is the humanities-- arts and music—that defines the quality of the school system.

Timothy Baldwin of 45 Ingraham Road, who is a teacher at Hardy as well as a father of 3 students in the Wellesley system, stated that cuts in the arts in the elementary schools are “shortsighted.”

Schools Operating Budget Presentation. Guests School Committee (SC) Chair KC Kato and Members Illisa Povich, Suzy Littlefield, Suzie Newman, Steve Burt and Superintendent Bella Wong, and Director of Student Services Linda Waters spoke to the Schools FY12 Operating Budget, the FY12 STTI Budget, and the FY12 Total and Gap Lists and to questions posed previously by Advisory. Class size guidelines was cited as a main driver for the operating budget and out-of-district placements was cited as a major driver behind the STTI budget increase. Advisory members had numerous requests for additional information including: costs of opening the new high school; cafeteria contract costs; costs related to shifting enrollments throughout the system; clarification of items related to some supervisory staff costs; strategies for stabilizing the STTI budget; clarification of per pupil expenditures; upcoming steps in the school budgeting process; and assumptions and plans for budgeting for FY13 and for a five year outlook in keeping with the TWFP process. In addition, Advisory asked the SC Chair of whether a long range plan was being prepared for the School given the projected increases in spending over the next few years and whether any structural changes could be considered as part of this planning process. The Advisory chair also asked whether the SC was going to participate in the formation of a subcommittee to deal with possible funding alternatives of STTI. The SC suggested they would try to address this at their next meeting.

Break. Advisory took a break at 9:45 p.m. and reconvened at 9:55 p.m.

Liaison Reports and Announcements. The Open Meeting Law regarding Citizen Speak and document presentation was discussed. Library Trustees will submit a revised FY12 Operating Budget after adding \$7,500 to the budget to meet state regulations regarding library budget increases. The Fuller Brook Park Project Team is reorganizing and will not proceed with Phase 3 at this time. The process for write-ups for the Advisory Report was discussed.

Adjournment. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Smith and seconded by Mr. Licari. The Committee then voted to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 13-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Davis
Administrative Assistant

Meeting Documents: FY12 School Budget; Wellesley Public Schools FY12 Recommended Budgets, Operating, Special Tuitions, Transportation and Inclusion, presented December 7, 2010; Memo: “School Budget” from the Schools Subcommittee, Wellesley Advisory Committee, to the Wellesley School Committee; Assessor Department FY12 Operating Budget Request; Warren Building Usage.